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Foreword and Preface

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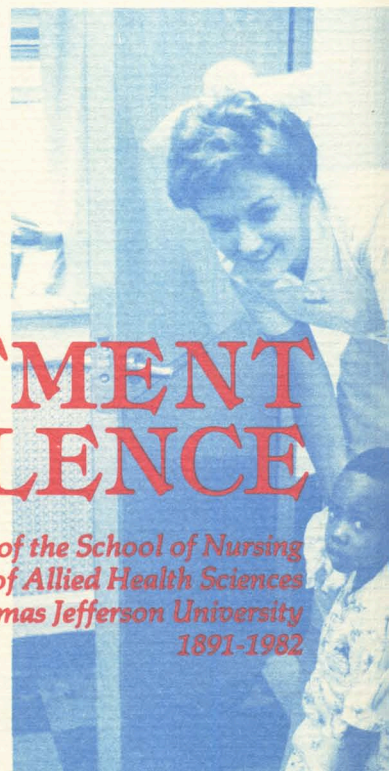
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A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

*A History of the School of Nursing
College of Allied Health Sciences
Thomas Jefferson University
1891-1982*



On a blustery fall day in 1891, thirteen young ladies, their cheeks blushed by the autumn chill and their hearts aglow with the promise of great adventure, entered the portals of Jefferson Medical College Hospital in Philadelphia. They were to begin a rigorous two-year course of education and training as professional nurses.

Only five of the original baker's dozen, who started as probationers in the Training School for Nurses, as it was then called, emerged from the crucible of the course to receive their diplomas in 1893. They were the vanguard of more than 5,000 "Jeff" graduates, who have fanned out across the nation and around the world to stamp the nursing profession with a special lustre.

This book relates the intriguing story of how one of the finest schools of nursing in the U.S. began, how it grew, and how it won its enviable reputation as a leader in nursing education during its 90 plus years of existence. The route of a pathfinder is never an easy one. But the School prospered through two wars, a depression, several recessions, and a blizzard of social changes.

As the story unfolds, we note how a unique "Jeff" spirit develops among the students, graduates, faculty, and friends of the School. This sense of belonging and kinship carried students through 14-hour days, bucked up the courage of graduates who tended the sick and wounded on the battlefields of Europe and Africa in World Wars I and II, and cemented the bonds of union via a strong Alumni Association launched in 1895.

The reader is invited to stroll back through the corridors of time in these pages to peek into a classroom lecture on Anatomy, to tip-toe by a hospital ward where students are working, to attend a solemn capping ceremony, to cheer on



The Nightingale Pledge

*I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the
presence of this assembly:*

*To pass my life in purity and to practice my profession
faithfully.*

*I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and
mischievous, and will not take or knowingly ad-
minister any harmful drug.*

*I will do all in my power to elevate the standard of my
profession, and will hold in confidence all personal
matters committed to my keeping, and all family
affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of
my profession.*

*With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his
work, and devote myself to the welfare of those
committed to my care.*

*This pledge was formulated in 1893 by a committee of which Lystra E.
Gretter, R.N., was chairman.*

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Text by Andrew W. Shearer

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*This book
is dedicated to
Doris E. Bowman
Emeritus Professor of Nursing and Director
of the
School of Nursing
and to the
Alumni of the School
whose commitment to
excellence is the
Jefferson tradition*

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F O R E W O R D

THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826), author of the Declaration of Independence and third president (1801-1809) of the United States, was a man of many interests, including all branches of science. Throughout his distinguished career as statesman and scholar, he clung to the belief that only virtue and talent set men and their works above their contemporaries. This principle is the rock base of the major medical institution which his name honors—Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

An academic health center, at whose core glows a 687-bed teaching hospital, the University consists of three colleges: Medical, Graduate, and Allied Health Sciences. These three are welded together into a tripod to support the University's basic mission of providing the optimum in medical education, research, and health care.

Woven closely into the development web of Thomas Jefferson University is the filament of the School of Nursing (see Chapter 2). Founded in 1891 as the Training School for Nurses of Jefferson Medical College Hospital, it has been a mainstay in the umbrella of the College of Allied Health Sciences since 1968. During the past 90½ years, it has graduated over 5,000 students who have served in hospitals, homes, schools, industries, the armed forces, public health agencies, etc., around the world.

But, along with back-porch America of a simpler age, nursing is moving into a new era. After much soul-searching, Jefferson endorsed the position taken by the American Nurses' Association in 1965 to the effect that basic professional nursing education should take place in institutions of higher learning and lead to a baccalaureate degree. Thus, beginning in 1979, a three-year phase-out of the School of Nursing program was launched. A 12-month course in Practical Nursing, begun in 1964, was eliminated in 1980.

The 38 members of the Class of 1982 of the School of Nursing were the last to wend their way under the traditional Arch of Roses at Commencement on June 10. Jefferson is now offering only a baccalaureate degree in nursing. However, in response to the wave of the future, studies are already under way to determine

the feasibility of graduate programs in nursing education.

Meanwhile, how should the passing of a renowned and beloved School of Nursing be honored? To be sure, the events that shaped its history and influenced the lives of its graduates alone form a rich legacy for posterity. Yet this is but half the story. What was it like to be a student in the school in yesteryear—the rigid discipline, the demanding curriculum, the hard work, and the comic relief in games, goof-ups and pranks?

To seek answers to this puzzle, a questionnaire was sent to all living alumni of the School requesting reminiscences of their student days, their impressions of the training, and comments on their professional careers. The replies indicated that memories of long and grueling hours in both classrooms and on hospital floors have not faded over the years. But, almost without exception, the respondents stated that being a "Jeff Nurse" is a distinction of which they will always be proud. Future generations of nurses will be hard put to match the loyalty, devotion, dedication, and professional competence of these diploma school graduates who have filed into the amphitheatre of history.

P R E F A C E

IN THE COURSE of writing this history of the School of Nursing, the author sought to sift out those events which seem to shed a special light on the past. The changing patterns in the School's development are in one sense a kaleidoscopic reflection of the times. When mirrored against a backdrop of nine decades, those traits which stamp the School as unique emerge in more meaningful terms.

Some readers, especially graduates of the School, may feel that a particular era of which they were a part has been passed over too lightly. By way of explanation, just nine months were allotted to produce this volume. Hence, an eclectic approach was imperative in the trust that the events recorded would stir added personal memories in the minds and hearts of all members of the school "family".

This document was commissioned by Lawrence Abrams, Ed.D., Dean of the College of Allied Health Sciences, in December 1981. Without the assistance of a number of individuals, it would have been a difficult mission to accomplish within the designated time limit.

First and foremost, Doris E. Bowman, Director of the School from 1958 to 1982, provided invaluable counsel, guidance, moral support, and a storehouse of reference material. Her niece, Laura A. Bowman, then a senior student at Syracuse University, spent her Christmas vacation with us to help out.

Margaret C. McClean, Assistant Director of the School, supplied colorful summaries of student activities and, in collaboration with Nancy T. Powell of the faculty, prepared captions for many of the photographs. Earl Spangenberg, Audiovisual Services, Jefferson Medical College, spent long hours in his darkroom reshooting and retouching a number of old prints, plus taking new pictures. School secretary Ruth Owens typed the voluminous manuscript, while office manager Eileen Casey juggled the workload to accomodate us.

Special notes of thanks for their contributions are also due to: Robert Lentz, custodian of the University Archives; John A. Timour, University Librarian, and Alice Mackov, User Education

Librarian, Scott Memorial Library; Martha E. Riland, Alumni Coordinator; Lillian Brunner, guiding spirit behind the Museum of Nursing History in Philadelphia; and Mabel C. Prevost '29, Director of Nursing from 1953 to 1958 and Assistant Director, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital beginning in 1958. Baldwin L. Keyes, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, Thomas Jefferson University, and organizer of Jefferson General Hospital No. 38 in World War II, together with Chief Nurse Edna W. Scott '28, pooled their memories of that era. Finally, a profound debt of gratitude is owed to those alumni, such as Mary Robinson Godfrey '09 who, through poignant vignettes and treasured snapshots, brought the past to life again.

Andrew W. Shearer

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
September 1, 1982

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